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Thomas Tohru Ogawa
10-S-C Minidoka Relocation Project
Hunt, Idaho
January 5, 1944.

Mr. Allan Fomeroy
Assistant United States Attorney
1017 U.S. Court House
Seattle, 4, Wash.

Re: Shinjiro Morita, Internee

Dear Sir:

This is an unsolicited testimonial on behalf of Mr. Shinjiro Morita, a Japanese national presently being detained under internment order, at the Alien Detention Station, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

I, Thomas Tohru Ogawa, am a Japanese national, was born and educated in Canada, was formerly an employee of Mitsubishi Company's Seattle Branch, and was paroled to this Project some four months ago from the Santa Fe Internment Camp. I acquired Japanese nationality in 1933 (I was a Canadian citizen at that time) solely in order that I might be permitted to reside in this country and so retain my position in the employ of Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha, Seattle Branch: I had discovered that, as a result of difficulties had with the U.S. Immigration authorities, I could legally reside here and work in the employ of Mitsubishi only under status of "Treaty Merchant," bearing a Japanese passport visaed in that non-immigrant classification. My reliability, moral character, integrity, loyalty to this country, and attitude towards the current hostilities all have been satisfactorily established, I believe, as a matter of record within your files.

I have known Mr. Morita since 1935 or 1936, and I associated intimately with him both socially and in sports during October, 1942, to August, 1943, while both of us were internees at Lordsburg and Santa Fe.

Prior to outbreak of war, I knew Mr. Morita as the hard-working hotel man employed at the Holland Hotel, in Seattle, Wash., the son-in-law of the late Mr. Sataro Minami who had long operated the hotel.

I lived in Seattle over twelve years, from 1929 to 1942, and all during that time it is a fact that the great majority of travellers from Japan, tourists, business men, educators, and governmental agents, stayed at the Holland Hotel while in Seattle. Travelling representatives of Mitsubishi and affiliated firms, Mitsubishi guests, and those bearing letters of introduction to Mitsubishi's Seattle Office, almost invariably stopped at the Holland Hotel, and the same is true of travellers connected with other Japanese firms maintaining branches in Seattle, not as a result of any contractual agreements or any other understanding, but merely from a general appreciation of the extraordinarily good service available to Japanese of that hotel. This fact was common knowledge even in Japan amongst those who made travel arrangements. The superior service was inaugurated by Mr. Minami, and maintained, after his illness and ultimate death, by Mr. Morita. The service included the closest personal attention by Mr. Minami, later by Mr. Morita, to all the needs and comforts of the traveller--purchasing of tickets, all-inclusive care of baggage, arranging and furnishing of transportation, shopping, entertaining, etc. etc. The popularity of Holland Hotel was deserved, especially by Japanese travellers the majority of whom would have, stopping elsewhere, required an interpreter to make known their simplest needs.

I have been given to understand that petitions seeking a rehearing for Mr. Morita have been recently denied by your office, apparently based primarily on the evidence that he had been in association with Japanese military officers and other governmental agents. I feel positive that these alleged associations were confined strictly to Mr. Morita's activities in the furtherance of Holland Hotel service, that he committed no hostile act towards this country, that he was conscious of no wrong doing in serving these men, and that he was not even aware of the nature of the travel missions under which the hotel guests came to Seattle. Japanese navy officer Okada, for example, was known as a member of the staff of the Japanese naval attache at Washington, D. C., and a hotel employee like Mr. Morita could not have known that Okada was involved in any underhand activity. Japanese from Japan, particularly military officers and government employees, observe class distinctions quite strictly, hence certainly would likely not have confided in Mr. Morita, a subservient hotel employee who did such menial labor as janitoring, portering, wallpapering, and running errands.

I am taking the trouble to write this because I admire and respect Mr. Morita as a gentleman, and particularly because I am convinced of his loyalty to this country from associating intimately with him at Lordsburg and Santa Fe. Mr. Morita is a true gentleman--kind, courteous, soft-spoken, sincere, honest--a straightforward man of high character. He works very hard, and helps everybody about him. At Lordsburg he worked, voluntarily, in the kitchen, and at Santa Fe he is concerned with policing and fire inspecting duties. He is a keen lover of sports, and actively participates in many games in internment camps, especially in soft-ball and tennis. My intimate association with him had origin in our mutual participation in sports.

What a Japanese says and does amongst Japanese internees while he himself is interned, I believe is by far the best measure of his loyalty, his sympathies respecting the present conflict. Having known Mr. Morita the internee, having had opportunity to observe him closely, and having heard his opinions, I am positive, just as positive as anyone can be in matters of this nature, that he is loyal to this country, that his sympathies are not with the Japanese war effort. He told me, and I have heard him tell others, that this is the better country. To those in doubt, he discouraged repatriation to Japan (he himself had not petitioned for repatriation) saying that Japanese residents here, accustomed to the free way of life under democratic government, would be disgusted and unhappy under the strict military regime of Japan. To the younger internees he cautioned that repatriation would result in prompt conscription by the Japanese army.

A great many internees, possibly the majority of them, may hold opinions and feelings as above, but certainly very few ever give any outward expression of the same. Loud talking, tantamount to speech-making, is invariably pro-Japanese. In such an atmosphere, it takes courage and a strong conviction to talk as Mr. Morita has.

Since coming to this Project I have had the pleasure of associating with Mr. Morita's family. His is certainly an American family. All members of the family, including Mr. Morita, are members of the Japanese Baptist Church, which was my church in Seattle. Some of his elder children obviously are bewildered, perhaps somewhat angered by the continued internment of their father, but this is only natural as they are fully confident that a mistake has been made. None of the children speak the ordinary conversational Japanese language nearly as well as even I do.